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# The Man Who Was Different

BY ROBERT FREEMAN

*Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. Genesis 5:24.*

OUR whole impression of many a city and town was obtained during the few minutes when we passed through the smoky, smelly, grimy railroad yards on the outskirts. That city is epitomized for us in dirt. It may have parks and gardens and schools and libraries, an art gallery on the lake, a university on the hill, wide lawns, attractive homes, an unexcelled community spirit; but we saw none of that. And we have our impression. There are a few places which, by endeavor or accidentally, have fixed themselves in the background of our memory with insistent claims that we return, all by virtue of a little grass, a clean stationhouse, and a screen of trees that limited our vision and excited our imagination. All we hear of many an opera is a single strain. Unconsciously we watch for it to come bringing us to the height of our pleasure, and as unconsciously we whistle or hum it for days after. All we see of many an art exhibit is a single piece, that statue of Napoleon in the Corcoran Gallery, Brozik's Columbus, or Jeanne d'Arc and her visions in the Metropolitan, the Rosetta Stone in the British Museum, a Murillo in the Louvre.

Similarly we have our total impressions of whole lives packed into the most concise phrases, octogenarians shut away in rhetorical pigeonholes, the great or small immortalized in single snaps of a vest-pocket kodak.

How frequently and how marvelously this is done in the Bible! Often a few words will not only sum up the quality of a life story, but will suffice to give also, like a Turner background, the whole surrounding and impregnating atmosphere. The young ruler who commanded Jesus' affection and his highest challenge went away "sorrowful, because he had great possessions."

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Martha was "careful and troubled about many *things*." The poor woman at Bethany won, as was promised her, the eternal memorial, "She hath done what she could." "And it was night" is the black and hopeless phrase that sums up the black and hopeless story of the betrayal of our Lord—it's all there. So, too, we read that Abraham was "the friend of God," and Enoch had this testimony, that "he pleased God," he gave pleasure to God.

### *LIFE STORIES IN A FEW WORDS*

Think of having as little said of you as was said of Enoch—one verse in the Old Testament and one in the New—and yet having that little so packed with significance as to give persistent life and unique influence five thousand or ten thousand years after your whole generation has vanished! You noted the monotonous list of epitaphs I read from the tombstones in that graveyard of the fifth chapter of Genesis (5:1-24). I knew it was an unexciting, repetitious succession. But I read it for the last sentence, the dramatic contrast. There was one man who was different. What made him different?

It is easy to throw an air of mysticism about such a man, and to make the difference purely an otherworldly difference, and that is just what was done in the early days of the church. In apocalyptic literature Enoch was made a preacher of repentance, a prophet of future events, the recipient by supernatural means of the secrets of heaven and earth. All sorts of fabulous legends were woven about his name. He was represented as the inventor of letters, of arithmetic, of phases of astronomy, and naturally he was credited with being the first author. A book containing his visions and prophecies is said to have been preserved by Noah in the ark, and handed down through successive generations. The man who walked with God was credited by early Christian writers with the enjoyment of superhuman privileges, the knowledge of the whole story of the origin of evil, the relations of men and angels in the past as well as their destiny in the future.

In the "Book of the Secrets of Enoch" is given a most elaborate description of the visit of this "very wise man" to the heavenly abodes. He is conveyed by the angels from earth through all the several heavens; privileged to view in the first, the great sea, the rulers of the stars, and all the treasuries of nature, snow and ice, clouds and dew; in the second, "the prisoners suspended, reserved for and awaiting the eternal judgment"; in the third, the tree of life on which God rests when he comes into Paradise, the place reserved for the righteous and the kind, while in the northern region of this same heaven is "a terrible place of savage darkness and impenetrable gloom, with fire on all sides, and on all sides cold and ice." Thence he ascends through the paradisal strata until he is exalted to the seventh heaven where he sees God sitting on his throne surrounded by the ten orders of the heavenly hosts and the seraphim singing the trisagion. There was he anointed with holy oil, clad in the "raiment of God's glory," and made to become like one of the glorious ones. Thereafter he wrote 366 books in thirty days and thirty nights concerning things in heaven and things on earth, the souls of men and their future dwelling place.

### *HOW ENOCH WAS DIFFERENT*

Perhaps you recall all that, or you hunt up the information; and you ask yourself where it was obtained. Your only answer is that it came from the same unadorned Bible record that you have in the verse in Genesis and the verse in Hebrews; and I hope you come to the conclusion that the inventors of these stories missed the point. It is not because he lived in another world and enjoyed generally unattainable privileges that Enoch was different. He did not belong in another world at all. It was not that his circumstances were different, but that he was different. The only hint we have of his circumstances identifies him with us: "Enoch walked with God and begat *sons and daughters*." He was a family man, with all the problems of feeding that family, and bringing up that family. Indeed he had his disappointments in that family—none of his children amounted to much, none is accorded any distinction in history save one and that merely because he is supposed to have lived longer than anyone else.

The thing about Enoch that made him unique was that he refused to be absorbed by his family, by his work, or by his limiting circumstances. He insistently cultivated what might easily be neglected—he walked with God. And he so assiduously walked with God that that was the thing people remembered about him, rather than any of the petty things that come to be the whole story of most of us. Sum up in a single phrase the life story of any of your acquaintances or relatives, of yourself if you can be sufficiently objective. Can you approximate in the remotest way such an epitaph as either of these two parts of the epitaph of Enoch?

Now, if he is worth anything to us, removed as he is by five millenniums of time, by the wide gulf of space and nationality and background and education, then he can be no mere ancient.

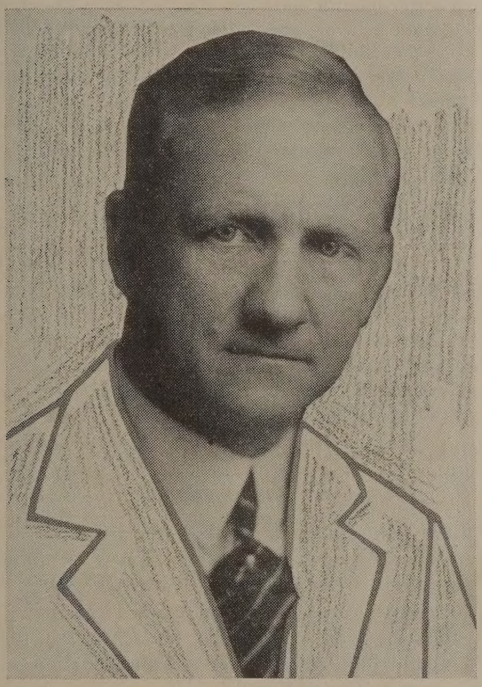
What the Bible needs as its chief protection is the exercise of a bit of reverent imagination. Literalism has been the plague of the Bible and can easily spell the ruin of religion for informed and thinking people. So let us do what the ancients did with these verses about Enoch, let us use our imagination.

### *AN ENOCH OF TODAY*

Enoch is an American, a neighbor of ours. Since God took him, I have been inquiring around a little, and there are some wholesome testimonies I should like you to hear. If it had been possible, I would have obtained some word from an employer of his, but you must remember Enoch was an old man when he left us. This at least is true of him, as a lad working for others and driving the first nails of his own character: he discerned that the doing of a given task was less important than the spirit in which it was done. Thus early it was evident that the big thing that concerned him was not his pay or the length of his hours, but the earning of his own approval for work well done. It was away back in his boyhood that the phrase first attached

to him that was to be made much of later: *"He* was not." His unselfishness was perfectly transparent, he was not always on the lookout for a chance to slack undiscovered, to pass burdens over upon others, to obtain unearned credit. He was not—the self-centered, self-seeking, shirking and grasping *he,* was utterly lacking in Enoch.

One of the men whom he employed latterly happened to belong to the same church. If there had been two sides to Enoch, this man would have known it. I have often heard him rating other prominent church men, and he seemed to know. He has been in such humble place as gave him good opportunity. I was a little fearful lest I hear something I did not want to



ROBERT FREEMAN

be true of Enoch. "I have never heard the boss speak in prayer meeting," says my man, "I have never seen him serve the communion. But I tell you I'd rather receive the cup from his hands and advice from his lips than from any others. Why, sir, he is white clear through. He knew what I was when I came to him, and he gave me a chance. More than that, when I slipped and fell after a year or so, he neither discharged me nor preached to me. He just seemed to understand, he looked as if he knew I wasn't quite to blame and would be made strong by his confidence in me; and he gave me another chance. He runs his business like a Christian. He never acts as if he owned us simply because he has bought part of our time. He seems to think we too belong in the business, at least he has arranged to have us share what the company makes. Of course, I can't tell him how I feel, but if you need a new elder on the session, why I'll give my votes to Mr. Enoch."

"Of course, I don't know much of Mr. Enoch," says the girl at the telephone exchange, "but one does get some impressions over the wires. You know we don't expect to be treated like members of the family by people who never see us, and we know that in the matter-of-fact transaction of giving and getting numbers there is no call for honeyed sweetness. But if you only knew how many people who never saw the inside of an exchange talk to us most impudently and brutally, you would understand my appreciation of Mr. Enoch. Only the other day a woman—yes, sir, you know her—but no, I can't repeat what she said or how she treated me as less than the dust. I sometimes wonder if the churches could not arrange to have a dictaphone detector to record some telephone conversations as part of the examination to be passed by prospective church members. At any rate, after she got through making me feel that I was responsible for broken wires and the war and the poor voice of the friend at Long Beach, she threatened to have me discharged. Then it just happened that Mr. Enoch called, and his voice was so quiet and he was so patient and understanding, that I just offered a little prayer in my heart for him, just a 'God bless you, Mr. Enoch.' That has happened a good many times, so that I have a feeling that Mr. Enoch is just God's man through whom he comes to me and speaks to me, and brings me peace. Do you think that's right, sir?"

### *ENOCH AS A LANDLORD*

"For the past eight years we have rented our house from him," speaks another. "Perhaps you know how unhappy can be the relation between owner and occupant, how each can strive for the advantage over the other. There is the question of repairs and the duty of upkeep. Now I wouldn't say that he has always done what we wanted done, but he has always been fair. And more than that, he has been interested in us. One day when I spoke of his kindness—he wouldn't take any rent the month I was in the hospital—he said that the best way to take care of property was to take care of the people who were in the property. He said folk were more interesting than bermuda grass; and, since buildings would deteriorate the best you could do, he tried to get his satisfaction out of improving people. We started in taking care of the lot just to have it look pretty to Mr. Enoch, but now we find that that work supplies us with all the vegetables we use. Why, Mr. Enoch has just been a godsend to us. I remember one evening when John and I were fearfully discouraged, nothing was going right, and we were in no mood to believe that there ever would be a turn for the better, Mr. Enoch dropped in to see about the plumbing, and talked to us a while about his own life. Somehow, we felt different after he left. Next day we went at things as if we were beginning all over again. And Mr. Enoch must have noticed, for he telephoned John about another job, and Mrs. Enoch dropped in to see me and to bring some things for the children. I don't know how we would have got along without him. Somebody said after his death that 'God took him'; but we have always felt that God had taken him. I

don't think God would ever have meant much to us if it hadn't been for Mr. Enoch."

### *A CONVERSATION THAT CHANGED LIFE*

And so I gleaned testimonies from the people with whom he had to do, the people who carried his accounts, the people who came to his door like the postman, the iceman, the paper-boy, and always there was the hint that he had been God's-man.

One young fellow in sailor uniform told me of a quiet personal conversation after a Sunday dinner at the Enochs' when he had been so impressed with the beauty and quality of the old man's life that he had asked the secret. "Somehow I felt," said the youth, "that I could never be quite the same free-and-easy youth after having been the guest of such a man. And when he told me how he had looked at a picture of Christ every morning and night for years, searching his heart, how he read a bit each day as if it had been written for him alone, I told him that it sounded easy, and I'd like to do it, too. 'Not so easy, lad,' said he. But he gripped my hand, and gave me the picture and the book. He can never know all that meant to me."

"Perhaps I know him best of all," says his wife. "If he had any faults or any virtues, they could hardly escape me. When we married, he was little different from other men, save that he was my hero. If he had died then, his record would have been like the others. But with the coming of our first-born, he seemed to awake to his responsibility. He worked harder, he was more thoughtful, he often said he wanted to be ready for anything that might happen. And he was. No trial made him sour, no circumstance made him cynical. He was never soft or weakly pious—he could blaze against evil, but even then one could see his religious quality, his spiritual background. The chiefest wonder of him is his going away from us. None of us feel that he has died. Anybody can die. Most people do die. But he was different. We can't speak of him that way. He is still alive—look among the people he touched. He has only been translated, moved into another house from which he can still carry on his work. And he did not think of death. He did not *see* death. Death was but a door into the other room. Why look at the door? It was but a servant ushering into the presence of the King. Who notices the page? The big thing about him was that he walked with God, and death was so little a matter that no one can ever think of it when they think of him. Death is sorrow, he was glad. Death is gloom, he was triumphant in hope. Death means a break, but he so lived in the sense of the continuity of life that by faith he was translated and never saw death."

### *NOT A PILLAR-SAINT*

Such human pictures as these of that man long ago who, like us, had to eat and sleep and work and have to do with people, had to bring up a family and hope to have them respectable and useful citizens, had to buy and sell and meet the difficulties, miseries, sorrows of life make him mean something to me. He wasn't merely a goody-goody, a pillar-saint or recluse, expecting by super-piety to dodge the death other folk had to face and be given a special angelic funeral called a translation. But I am afraid I have not made you hear Enoch preaching as he has been preaching to me. I wish I might.

I have been conscious of the same influence as I remembered again the testimony of the Scotch woman to George Matheson. She had left the dark cellar for a garret filled with sunlight and beautified with a potted geranium: "Ye canna live in a cellar and hear Matheson preach." That's Enoch.

I have been conscious of it as I reread James Whitcomb Riley's "Jim"; here is a verse or two:

Any shopmate'll tell you there never was,
on top o' dirt,
A better feller'n Jim!
You want a favor, and couldn't git it anywheres else—
You could git it o' him!
Most freeheartedest man thataway in the world, I guess!
Give up ever' nickel he's worth—
And, ef you'd a-wanted it, and named it to him,
and it was his,
He'd a-give you the earth!
"But death hain't a-showin' no favors," the old boss said—
"On'y to Jim!" and cried;
And Wigger, who puts up the best sewed-work in the shop—
Er the whole blame neighborhood—
*He* says, "When God made Jim, I bet
He didn't do anything else that day
But jes' set around and feel good!"

Well, that's Enoch!

### *YOU MAY BE ENOCH!*

I have been conscious of the same influence in the tribute of a Glasgow woman to Henry Drummond, the exquisitely dressed professor of natural science. "Oh Sir, would you come and see my man. He's deein', Sir. He canna speak to you, and he canna hear you speak; but I would just like a breath of you about him afore he gaes awa." That is Enoch!

You see, he does not have to have lived five thousand years ago. You can be Enoch. Maybe I could be Enoch. The testimony that we have attained may not be given in any memorial oration or published paragraph or chiseled epitaph, but in the hearts of some living few, that *God took us,* not away from the world but as his instruments of approach in the world. God took us, hand and tongue and eye and disposition. God took us, and taking us made it easier for others to live, to believe, to endure, to die, to triumph. "He was not —for God took him"—that will be the testimony.

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I HAVE seen new men made out of old ones on this very coast, new hopes engendered in the wrecks of humanity. So that once, when whispering into the ear of a dying man on board a tiny schooner, and asking him if the years since the change took place in him had been testified to by his life, in the most natural way in the world he was able to answer, "I wish you'd ask my skipper, Doctor."

WILFRED T. GRENFELL.

# Keeping Spiritually Fit

By Hugh Stevenson Tigner

IN the New Testament letter of James we are given the following definition of religious living: "Pure, unsoiled religion in the judgment of God the Father means this: to care for orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself from the stain of the world." (Moffatt's translation.)

The first part of that definition, "caring for orphans and widows in their trouble," sounds acceptable to everybody. By it the writer meant acts of personal service and help for those in need. One need not be a Christian to approve that—at least in theory and up to a certain point. But the second part of the definition, "and to keep oneself from the stain of the world," is not so apt to win our approval. Moderns are not in the habit of using that language. We don't like it. It suggests a fellow who thinks he is too good to associate with us. It suggests being "an angel," and if there's anything we don't like it's a little angel in human form. More seriously than that, it suggests an aloofness from the world which we do not consider healthy, or normal, or practical, or even right.

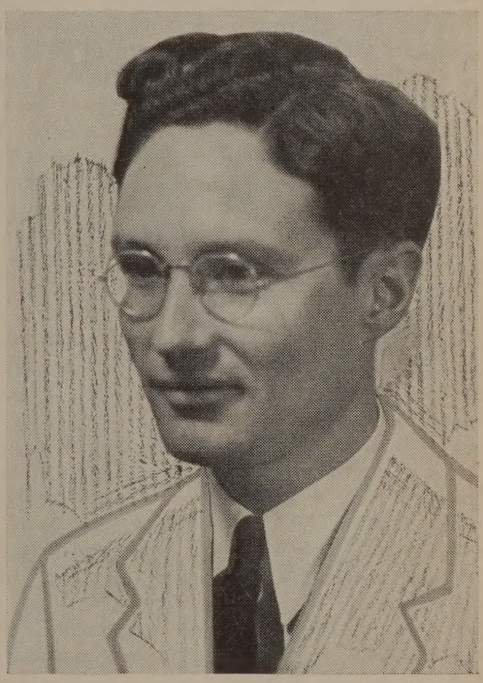
Of course James did not mean that religious living involves being a prig or withdrawing from the world in which it is normal to live. The context in which his definition appears makes this plain. He attacked the pride, presumptuousness and hypocrisy of the prig; and the first part of his definition, as well as many other parts of his epistle, emphasize the fact that it is not withdrawal from the world which he has in mind. What he meant by "keeping oneself from the stain of the world" was not looking upon the world as too dirty a place in which to live, but living in the relationships of the world lighted by what he called the "wisdom from above."

Possibly this second part of James' definition could be rendered as "keeping oneself spiritually fit." But I think there is much power and edification in the original expression, "to keep oneself from the stain of the world," and I see no good reason for dropping it. I think the Christian conception of life would be weakened if it were dropped. I think we need to be reminded that there are stains in the world to which we are easy subjects, and that Christian living involves among many other things keeping ourselves free from them.

## II

Soren Kierkegaard, that extraordinary Dane of the last century who wrote many luminous pages about the spiritual life, composed a fable about a wild duck used to the freedom of the trackless wilderness of the air. On one of his migrations north he alighted at evening time in a farmyard where the tame ducks were being fed. He ate some of their corn and liked it so much that he lingered until the next meal, and then the next week, and month, until the autumn came and his old companions flew over the farmyard sending their cries to him that it was time to be up and away. The old ecstasy stirred within him again and he flapped his wings with joyous resolution to soar into the sky. But he got no higher than the eaves of the barn roof, for he had grown fat on the farmer's corn, and the indolent, easy life of the barnyard had taken the zip and soaring power out of him. He resigned himself to remain there and observed in his duck's mind that the place had its good points. Each season thereafter until his death the calls of his fellows passing over roused him. But each year the calls seemed fainter and farther away. The wild duck had become a tame duck. He had become thoroughly dyed with the stains of the world.

This allegory applies to all sorts and conditions of men. Even when it does not describe a man's career it



Hugh Stevenson Tigner

describes the ever present peril which his pathway skirts. The saints, no less than anyone else, are subject to the weakening of their loyalty to the best, to the cooling off of their devotion, to a slow, insidious substitution of the wisdom which comes from below for the wisdom which comes from above.

Consider, for instance, man's mercurial nature. Today we may be visited by an enthusiasm for the true, the worthy, the just, the pure, the excellent, the divine. Like Jacob, we are granted a very opening into heaven, and become converted to that insight as revealing the way in which a man should walk. We may make a compact between ourselves and this knowledge, and feel that our world is henceforth recreated and our life redirected in that instant. But tomorrow is a different day. The enthusiasm of yesterday has vanished. The warmth has cooled off. The vow is not so binding. Clouds shut out the bright light of the wisdom from above, and we are living in a lower key. Where we were impervious to the

stains of the world before, our pores are now as open as a sieve.

We revert to older and easier habits. We follow the line of least resistance. We take on the coloration of the conventional and average life about us. If we are strongly tempted to repudiate or sell out that to which we pledged an everlasting loyalty in the hour of our visitation, we may yield; and for that yielding there lie ready to hand a dozen honorable excuses. Evils which exist in our environment touch us and we do not hold them off; evils which live within us assert themselves and we do not weed them out. A whole crop of habits and attitudes which contradict the truest truth and the most precious values that we know are allowed to take root and flourish.

That high intention we were going to honor is not honored, and that task we felt inspired to perform is not done. Promises are broken. The ordinary duties and simple obligations which entwine our lives and give them a large part of their substance are neglected. We get careless and shoddy and thoughtless. The fine example we were going to set; the testimony to our faith and hope we vaguely intended to make; the act of good will, the neighborly deed, the relief of suffering we dimly resolved upon get lost in the shuffle. We fall into a habit of dishonest and self-deceptive thinking.

A fear enters into our life; we allow it to grow, we fertilize it with imagination and arm it with all kinds of clever schemes and wily devices until it becomes one of the principal dictators of our action. An injustice done us, an act of ill will against us—whether real or fancied—is permitted to make us embittered and fill us with the spirit of vengeance. A peeve develops into a grudge and a grudge into a resolute hate. A discouragement, disappointment or frustration, a passing blue mood are allowed to have their way until gloom and defeatism become the regular tone of our months and years. We forget our divine background, our high calling, our critical responsibility and privilege as children of God. We fall into the custom of thinking of ourselves, our life and the persons about us in terms of a much lower connection. And in this forgetfulness we become an easy prey of the impulses and bribes which hold living to the level of mediocrity and often plunge it below that level into the things which destroy life.

When these things happen we become, in the terms of Kierkegaard's fable, tame ducks, ordinary barnyard fowls leading a barnyard existence; and the longer we remain in this state the fainter and farther away sound the calls to be up and on high. Or, as the letter of James puts it, we become deeply tarnished with the stains of the world, lighted only with that wisdom from below which is "earthly, animal, demon-like."

## III

Now, no man is ever removed from the danger of these backslidings. Not even a saint is given to stand alway and without exception upon his highest places. There are days and weeks and months when we live spiritually in our cellars, uninspired and uninspiring. There are times and circumstances when we fail to be loyal to our truest, deepest and best selves. But the final judgment upon these slippings and slidings comes with the question: Do we stay down? When we have fallen from our heights do we content ourselves with remaining in the lower place? Do we have any method for bringing ourselves up again? A pure, unsoiled religion in the sight of God the Father means, among other things, that a man will eventually free himself from these stains of the world, climb out of these cellar pits, quit these tame-duck, barnyard dominions.

It is surprising, when you stop to think of it, that so many people today, both those who call themselves Christians and those who don't, pay so little attention to the Christian religion on this particular score. It seems never to occur to vast numbers of otherwise intelligent people that they need to expend no small effort in frequently climbing back upon their high places, in living inspired and inspiring lives. And still less does it occur to them that Christianity has abundant resources available for this need.

The Christian religion provides in its faith and tradition an environment, a field of consciousness, a body of disciplines in which the true, the worthy, the just, the pure, the high-toned, the excellent and meritorious are made to shine before us in such a way that we are not allowed to wander completely from their light. A man of Christian faith is set in their midst in such a way that he is indicted and stimulated, warned and led by them.

Everyone appreciates the value of background and environment in stimulating us to do certain things. We know, for example, that a person who has been sent to prison or reformatory, and who comes out of such an institution resolved to leave behind his former way of life, hasn't a ghost of a chance unless he can begin over again in a new environment. If he goes back to the scene of his former misdeeds he will be branded with his old reputation, he will be accepted only by his former cronies in crime, he will be shoved back into the same situation in which he was impelled and enticed to commit crime in the first place. He will commit crime again. The environment is favorable for it. If he would lead a better life he must find a setting which will stimulate and encourage it.

With this fact commonly understood it seems strange that so many people today turn hither and yon in search of some faddish formula that will save them from a sense of emptiness and futility, make them happy and successful, enable them to wake up and live after forty, yet pay no attention to the background against which they live. Just where do they expect this stimulation to come from? What resources do they expect to draw upon, what disciplines do they intend to use? How shall they amplify that call to be up and on high so that it shall not sound fainter and farther away as the years roll by?

The very first thing which the Christian faith does is to set a man against a splendid background, a divine background. It tells him that there is something tremendous astir in creation and that he is involved in that stirring. It tells him that he has something planted within him by the living God that he must be mindful of and serve, as the Quakers say, in "holy obedience." It tells him that he must not look upon himself or his fellow men cheaply, nor estimate life meanly. He is

compelled to remember what man truly is and the significance which inheres in his living.

Then, as a member of the historic stream of Christian life, he has a heritage to edify and nourish him. He is encompassed by a host of witnesses, taught and encouraged by a thousand before him who have sought and found. He has what T. S. Eliot has called "the backing of the dead."

And as a practitioner of the faith the Christian has the disciplines which have been developed and tried by others of the way, the disciplines of solitary prayer and meditation, of corporate worship and of the reading of spiritual literature.

IV

Not many of us avail ourselves of these disciplines or take them very seriously. Many look upon them with disdain. Not too many understand them, or are interested in understanding them. A popular notion has it that they are of the nature of magic formulas, and so if you don't believe in magic this makes them out "the bunk." But no man who ever used them with understanding ever suggested that they were magic formulas. They are simply necessary methods for keeping one awake to what he naturally becomes dozey about.

If we have any desire to be stimulated in a particular direction it is only elementary common sense to place ourselves under circumstances where we will be exposed to stimuli in that direction. When Francis of Assisi sat in the chapel and heard a priest read these words, "Take nothing for the journey, neither stick nor wallet, nor bread nor silver, and do not carry two shirts," he knew he had found his rule of life. He had read and heard those words before, but they had said nothing to him. Now they spoke with commanding accent. Had Francis failed to expose himself to such stimuli, he would never have become a saint.

One is reminded of that great scene in Dostoievsky's *Crime and Punishment* where a harlot and a murderer sit together in a bare room, both of them abandoned to despair, and read by the light of a flickering candle, which is the strongest light they have left in the world, the story from the Bible about the raising of Lazarus from the dead. From the reading of that story comes the knowledge that they too can be raised from the dead. And they are.

What a difference it would have made in the lives of these people, and of thousands like them, if they had not made a practice of exposing themselves to certain reminders. And how dull and irresponsible we are, we who follow a religion whose function it is to set us again and again upon our highest places, if we do not make use of the tested methods developed by the men who have followed that religion before us. How ignorant and indolent we are if we do not turn to Christianity and use it for the help it has to give.

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THE Christian rich man is not hard in business and soft in charity, but of one fiber throughout. His business is a part of his religion, and his philanthropy is a part of his business.

FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY.

# The Road to Personal Faith

BY HARRISON RAY ANDERSON

*I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;*
*But now mine eye seeth thee:*
*Wherefore I abhor myself,*
*And repent in dust and ashes.*

*Job 42:5, 6.*

CARLYLE, speaking of the book of Job in which is found the text of the morning, said, "I call this book one of the greatest things ever written." Victor Hugo said he considered it to be "the greatest masterpiece of the human mind." Henry M. Stanley, while searching for David Livingstone in Africa, became very ill with a raging fever. In his weakness he turned to his Bible and found in Job and the Psalms not only comfort but such a leading of God's Spirit as to take him to his knees in prayer and to his God in renewed devotion.

Many regard the book of Job as the finest writing on the theme of human suffering. It seems to me, however, that to regard this book as merely this is to be greatly mistaken. Suffering is there, but there are things there which are beyond suffering. In this great book God's servant makes his journey from nominal religion to personal trust in God. It is over that path I invite you to travel this morning. The journey leads from a town called Prosperity through a valley named Tragedy to a mountain of Triumph!

### *A GREAT MAN STRICKEN*

Here is this man, at the beginning, successful and popular. He is the great man, the laird, of his locality. His attitude is right, his ethics are high, and his benevolence unquestioned. He could occupy a pew in this church this morning and be looked up to by every man in Chicago. He was surrounded by a lovely home; seven sons and three daughters and such prosperity as is beyond our computing here. The only shadow that seems at this time to cross his life is his concern over his children. He is not sure that they are going to carry on and he prays for them. "It may be," he says, "that my sons have sinned and renounced God." This is the man that is taken from this lovely setting out into the proving ground of the soul.

The Adversary of God and man charges that Job is a good man because it pays to be good and that any man would keep faith if he had what God had given Job. "Take it away from him and he will renounce you." So it is taken away; and in bundles bound closely together. One day a servant with eyes of fear arrives, saying, "The Arabs have stolen the oxen and killed the servants." Another servant arrives, out of breath, "Lightning has killed the sheep and the young men who cared for them." Before this messenger is through with his tale, a third arrives to announce the loss of the camels and the death of the drivers. Finally, a fourth runner is at Job's door, hardly daring to speak,

and when he does, this is his tragic story, "Your children were banqueting and the house fell on them and they are dead."

Now all of these blows come to us second-hand, and in the form of cold words, and how indifferent words can be! We say, "His wife is dead." Four one-syllable words, but what little of the agony they tell! We say, "His business has failed." How little of the long, heroic struggle they relate!

So these four blows fell upon Job, one after another, and in quick succession. Then this man staggers up, tears his tunic, shaves his head, and falls on the ground in humble worship, crying: "Naked came I forth, naked will I return: the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken; blessed be the name of the Lord." Thus he met the loss of property and children.

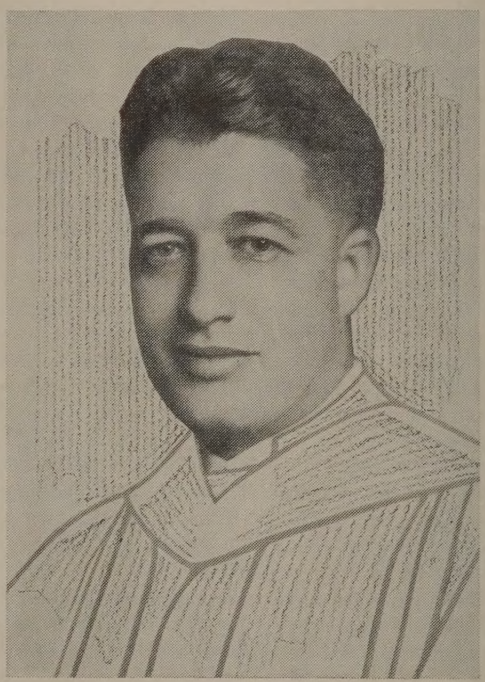
### THE TEST OF PHYSICAL SUFFERING

But the testing continues. "Touch him with physical suffering and he will quit," is the charge of the Tempter. And so to this man there come painful ulcers from head to foot and we see him diseased and broken, and so changed that his friends do not know him or his servants regard him. Humiliated and almost helpless, he wrestles with pain and shame. There, in the midst of it, his wife comes. "Curse God and die," is her helpful counsel. O thank God for those who hold us up during such hours, and may God reveal it to loved ones here this morning how they can help each other in such testing times. What a tragedy for loved ones to destroy each other's faith! But Job comes through. "I can take it," he seems to say. "God gave me good, and this too must be my lot." And so he suffers on and has won his second round.

He has three opponents in the third round. He had had one in the first, loss; he had had two in the second, disease and a foolish, shallow wife; he has three in the third. You can find their names, although I doubt if they are worth remembering. They came to him supposedly to help him. As far as I can discover, they were the first of the pests listed in the Bible of a race that has continued to this day of people who stay too long and talk too much when they are calling on sick folk. So much of what they say is true, but they cancel that by the way they say it. One of Job's callers says that God is pure and that Job is the opposite or he would not be suffering. Another argues that God is just, and the third that God is wise and knows what he is doing; to all of which Job answers, "If you have said that I have lost my children and have come to this because I am immoral, you lie. I will maintain my integrity even in the face of God. He is just and he will answer me." And Job does just that to the very end, and the end of the long argument sees this poor old sufferer pulling himself up, and saying defiantly to them: "I have not been false; I have not been impure; I have had a social conscience, and treated my servants and my neighbors correctly; I have met need wherever I found it." There he stands, broken in body, trembling, exhausted, but honest at the end of the third long, weary inning. You feel like rushing up to him and throwing your hat in the air, and saying: "Three cheers for you, old fellow!" Read that chapter, Job 31; perhaps the finest ethics in the whole of the Old Testament are in it.

### A SICK MAN FIGHTING

But of the agony of the soul that he went through with those three men, who could have helped him, but who hurt him so, we must speak a little more. What they were saying was just the popular belief which Jesus at last gave the lie to by word and life; namely, that suffering results from our own sin. We know that sin causes suffering always for man and for God, but we also know that God is a Father of love and that he could not delight in the pain of a child of his any more than you can. Suffering is a mystery, like a great deal of life. We know much about it, but the rest, like a great many other things, has to be left where this book leaves it—in the mystery of God. We cannot find an answer for it, but we can do something better than that: We can get a blessing from it . . . we can get a blessing from it by God's help and our patience.



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Here, in this ancient book, is a sick man fighting. If I were a doctor I would study that. If I were a nurse I would read that. If I were a medical student I would eat that up. Perhaps you could even diagnose his trouble by his reactions. He is weak and he becomes afraid. Things bother him. Trouble upsets him. Counsel that once he has given others seems unreal to him now in his new state. He longs to die but cannot. If a man die one day, he asks, shall he live again? Men ask that on their backs. One day he exclaims out of pain: "I know that my Redeemer liveth and that some day he shall stand up, and that I shall then see God."

Another day he can say this: "He, God, knoweth the way I take. When he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold." To his friends he cries for quiet, for pity, and for kindness. "Let me alone," finally, is his word.

Job's friends took advantage of his weakness to hurt him more. But they are through, now, and in the place comes a young man who has kept still. Elihu is his name. He roughly treats with these false friends. To Job he speaks of God. "God does not do evil and God does not pervert justice. God's purpose is to save men in their suffering. Humble yourself, Job, in his presence." How fortunate for every modern man that the young man that speaks to us is Jesus, who shows us on the cross God suffering with man as well as for man: God saving men through suffering and in suffering.

#### *FROM NOMINAL RELIGION TO PERSONAL TRUST*

Then at last comes the voice of God to Job. The other voices are still—now comes the word of God, and it comes out of the storm. He hears God for himself. He is humbled. He is brought low. God becomes God for him. He has talked too much about things of which he knew too little. His pride goes; his faith remains and is rekindled. God has brought his poor tested servant through the floods and on to personal trust in him such as he had never had before. "Before I had heard of you by hearsay, now I have seen you for what you really are. My God, I repent and I trust."

From nominal religion this man has passed through the fires to personal trust in God. In his travail he has traveled through tragedy to triumph.

And the time is no longer yesterday, but today. And the man's name you know or will know some day. It will sound very familiar; in fact it will be your own. The pathway opens before us all. As we walk it, may we remember Job and all others who have been put to the test, and have kept the faith and have been kept by it. May we remember Jesus Christ and what he has said to us, and what he has done for us. These are his words to us: "I have said all this to you that in me you may have peace; in the world you have trouble, but courage! I have conquered the world. He who has seen me has seen the Father!"

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" asks St. Paul. Then he lists our possible testings: tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword. Then he answers out of his own brave life: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." None of them, nor anything else shall "be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"Beloved," wrote St. Peter, to a people undergoing persecution, "do not be surprised at the ordeal that has come to test you, as though some foreign experience befell you. You are sharing what Christ suffered, so rejoice in it, that you may also rejoice and exult when his glory is revealed."

"What this parish needs," said Thomas Carlyle to his new minister, "is a minister who knows God other than by hearsay." Perhaps in these testing times we all can find him out.

# Reunion Through the Spirit

**By Frederick C. Grant**

*Not by might nor by power,*
*But by my Spirit,*
*Saith the Lord of Hosts.*
*Zechariah 4:6.*

*When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which issues from the Father, he will bear witness to me; and you too are witnesses, for you have been with me from the very beginning. John 15: 26-27* (Moffatt).

CHRISTIANITY began its course in history as a religion of the Spirit. Both these passages meant much to the early Christians. I have chosen the two texts because they are so far apart—one at the beginning of the development of the idea of the Spirit of God, in the Old Testament; the other near the end of the development of that doctrine as seen in the New Testament. In between the widely separated stages reflected by these texts lay a colossal and transforming spiritual experience, out of which the Christian religion was born. The experience began within Judaism. John the Baptist preached the coming of the Messianic Judge: "I have baptized you in water; he will baptize you in holy Spirit and in fire." This hardly meant the calm, gentle, secret influence of which we sing in one of our hymns: it was to be the consuming, overwhelming flood of a river by celestial flame which should presently flow from the judgment seat of God's messenger, eating away the dross in human hearts, in human habits and institutions: molten star-stuff, the glory of God made palpable, as if the very life and heat of the sun were to be poured out in a liquid stream upon the earth! The language is apocalyptic, with the intense poetic realism of the Book of Revelation and other oracular literature of that time.

#### *JUDAISM'S DOCTRINE OF THE SPIRIT*

But the conception of the Spirit, and of the Spirit's baptism, is older than John, far older. We do ancient Judaism a grave injustice, we do the Old Testament a grave injustice when we deny or ignore its doctrine of the Spirit of God. But it was a concrete idea: the Spirit was a kind of effulgence from God himself—not an influence merely, not a hypothesis designed to account for the strange phenomenon of inspiration; but a power not only surmised and believed but actually experienced. It wrought miracles. Men could hear with their own ears, see with their own eyes, the work of the Spirit of God.

And so it was still, in the days of the Apostles. Not only Pentecost and the fulfillment of ancient prophecy which that day inaugurated but every outbreak of the "speaking with tongues" in the early church—in Corinth as well as Jerusalem—was attributed to the Spirit. Jesus had cast out demons by the Spirit of God; so did his Apostles. The Spirit which came upon Jesus inspired his ministry to the sick and empowered his

cures; so too it inspired and empowered the works wrought in his name by the Apostles. It was a numinous presence, as we say today—one might almost say an "ominous" presence: it might strike a man dead—as it did poor Ananias and his wife Sapphira, who "lied to the holy Spirit." It was always a dangerous thing to come too closely in contact with God—even from good motives, like Uzzah in the Old Testament story, who put out his hand to steady the sacred ark, and fell dead. It was like the high electric voltage of a "live" wire; it could be handled only by experts, and then sometimes with fatal results.

This was a very naive idea of God, but a popular one in the ancient world; and among the common people in whose midst Christianity originated and spread, it was an inevitable part of their thought of God, and of their practice of religion. And their experience bore out their idea.

### THE SPIRIT AS CONCEIVED BY PAUL

It was the Apostle Paul, chiefly, who rescued and deepened and, so to speak, "spiritualized" the idea of the Spirit. Instead of a strange, unaccountable, unpredictable, eerie force at work in the Christian community, he taught that the Spirit of God is the life-principle of the Christian believer. Paul's doctrine of the Spirit almost completely overlaps his favorite teaching that the believer is "in Christ," mystically united to him in baptism, sharing the Lord's own crucifixion, burial and rising again. "If we live by the Spirit, then by the Spirit let us also walk." And the "fruits" of the Spirit are not the weird, bizarre, unaccountable results of divine possession—the counterpart, on a loftier level, of possession by demons; or the strange gibberish men talked in hours of strong emotional excitement, the "glossolalia" or speaking with tongues at Corinth and elsewhere; on the contrary, the "fruits" of the Spirit were the great positive Christian virtues: "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, gentleness, patience. . . ."

The great thing about Jesus was not his "mighty works," celebrated in the synoptic Gospels, or even the transcendent "Signs" reported in John; it was his meekness, his gentleness, his reasonableness, his love—the *epieikeia* which Matthew Arnold said is untranslatable, and which for Paul himself, who used the term, is really something ineffable and divine. That was the greatness of Jesus: his divine-human character, the quality of his life, his spirit, manifested in all his teaching and in his daily walk and conversation, and supremely tested, supremely revealed, on the cross. For Paul, as for Charles Lamb, Jesus could not even enter his thoughts without a mental genuflection on his part. And as the greatness of Jesus was his Spirit, now clearly identical with the Spirit of God, and completely revealing God—so that Paul could even say, "The Lord [i.e. Christ] *is* the Spirit"—so likewise the manifestation of the Spirit of God in the lives of Christians is something not weird and bizarre and unusual, but commonplace. At least it was *meant* to be commonplace: something that *would* be commonplace if only Christians lived up to their high calling in every day.

What Paul did, therefore, was as we say to "ethicize" the primitive Christian belief and worship. As the prophets in the Old Testament had brought the crude, primitive, eudaemonistic Hebrew cultus to the highest level of ethical religion, so Paul in the New Testament brought the current belief in the Spirit to the highest level of ethical religion; and that test, that criterion, was the spirit of the life of Christ—in more theological terms, "the Spirit of Life *in* Christ Jesus our Lord."

### THE SPIRIT AS 'COMFORTER'

We can now readily see how the way was clear for the further step taken in the Fourth Gospel, as reflected in our second text. The Spirit is the Helper, the Advocate, the "Comforter" as the old version has it. He—or It—comes from the Father, is sent upon his church by the Risen, Glorified, Eternal Christ; he bears "witness" to Jesus, recalling Jesus' teaching to the memories of his disciples, and interpreting what they remembered; as the ever present Helper he inspires their testimony to Christ; indeed, in the persecutions, he "gave them a mouth and wisdom," taught them what to answer when on trial for their lives as followers of Christ.

It was a long chapter in the evolution of spiritual religion that lay between our two texts; and one of the very greatest importance for Christian faith, doctrine, worship and practice.

Let me add only two comments: first, every description, every statement of the New Testament regarding the Spirit fits somewhere in this series of stages in the early development of our religion; and second, every stage in that development was the result of a vital, resurgent, transforming experience. Out of it came mysticism—but only because at heart mysticism is the effort to cultivate things passing comprehension and definition. Out of it came the third article of the creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost"—but with no definition, beyond the simple titles added at Nicaea and Constantinople, "The Holy Spirit, the Lord of Life, the Giver of Life." Out of it came the doctrine of sacraments conveying the Spirit, the new birth at baptism, the Invocation at the Eucharist, the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit at Confirmation, the Holy Spirit conferred—or rather conferring himself—at Ordination, at Christian marriage, at the seal of God's forgiveness of sin, at the healing of the sick, and at the dying Christian's final preparation for the life to come.

### GOD'S SPIRIT HERE, AND AT WORK

Out of it came the ordered round of the church's ministrations to the sick and to the well, to sinners and to saints, to the ministry and to the laity, to all men in need of divine forgiveness, renewal and grace. But along with it came also the doctrines and practices of the mystics, the flaming enthusiasm of reformers and idealists, the utopian dreams of a Joachim of Florus, the missionary zeal of a poet and evangelist like Raymond Lully, the visions of a St. Catherine, the quiet contemplations of a St. Bonaventura, the Inner Light by the early Friends, the sober, edifying discipline by the Brethren of the Common Life—and a thousand more manifestations of genuine spiritual power in the long epic tale of Christian advance through the centuries.

Back of them all lay the miraculous experience of men and women who knew God and realized his presence through the Spirit; who received their commissions for heaven-sent tasks through prayer and communion with the Spirit; and who were supported, through hard days and bitter trials and sore defeats until victory at last was theirs, through the Spirit. Christianity was "pneumatic," i.e. Spirit-filled, Spirit-guided, in its first great age; and in every great age since; and in many of its noblest leaders, the saints who made over the world in their several generations.

But for all that, here is the extraordinary thing: the Christian Church has never quite taken to heart the utter reality, the immediate presence, the inexhaustible

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power of the Holy Spirit. I remember the late Father Barry, of St. Mary the Virgin's, New York, once saying in a sermon: "The Christian Church ought to erect altars of reparation to God the Holy Spirit for its neglect of him in worship, in thought, in doctrine and practice." In truth, we are somewhat afraid of the Spirit—like Simon Magus after the Apostle's threatening, or like those miserable Israelites at the foot of Sinai: "Speak thou to us, speak any man to us; but let not God speak to us, lest we die." The primitive terror at the thought of God's immediate presence, God's direct control of human life, has been a long time with us, and is still potent and inhibiting!

But where *is* God, anyway, if he is not in his world, in his church—present here and now and at work through his Spirit? "Is he away on a journey," as Elijah taunted the priests of Baal, the false god they had substituted for the God of Israel? "Is he asleep? . . . Then cry aloud and waken him," the prophet shouted! Or did he abandon his finished task when the six days of creation were ended? No; "my Father worketh hitherto." Or did he wind up the universe like a clock, as the Deists thought, then let it run—i.e. run down—by its own accord? Or did he establish a church, a hierarchy, an ecclesiastical system, and then leave it to men, unaided, to work out its details to the end of time? Not so is the divine Helper thought of in the New Testament!

But we are told that the New Testament is the complete pattern of the ecclesiastical system, i.e. of *our* system, or rather of *mine,* whoever I may be and whatever my particular denomination; and that the New Testament sets forth this wound-up-clock conception of the church and of the Christian religion. *Not so!* Absolutely, not so! The New Testament takes for granted God's act, God's intervention, God's presence and his reign, his mighty work in these days, here and now and in the immediate future. The New Testament is the very charter of the religion of the Spirit! If our appeal is to the New Testament, then let us abide by the consequences. "Thou hast appealed to Caesar; to Caesar shalt thou go!"

### *THE CHURCH CREATED BY THE SPIRIT*

The first and most outstanding consequence is that the church itself is the creation of the Spirit, belongs to the Spirit, and cannot be cornered and controlled by any one man, or group of men, or sect, or division within the body. It is Catholic in its very essence, and by its very nature. And the divine Spirit has many modes of manifestation; there are many gfts and offices, but one and the same Spirit, as Paul said. No one can be a monopolist of spiritual gifts and graces, or of the authority conferred, "severally, as he wills," by the Spirit. And moreover, the New Testament contains dreadful warnings against those who would, by a pretended monopoly, rend the unity of the church, or, worse still, assign the good works of others to anything less than the highest inspiration, the highest source of divine grace. That is the "blasphemy against the holy Spirit," which "hath never forgiveness, but is an eternal sin"—to say that any good works done in God's name are void, futile, empty, meaningless, or inspired by the evil one and not "wrought in God."

The religion of the New Testament is not the religion of "following Christ," to the best of one's ability, or even the "imitation of Christ" in a life of pure mystical, ascetical devotion; nor is it even the worship of Christ. "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" The religion of the New Testament is God-centered, Spirit-guided, filled with a sense of the immediate presence and power of God manifest and active in the here and now, through the Spirit, molding and transforming human life, and leading from grace to grace, from insight to insight, from power to power. It is anything in the world but the water-tight, closed system dear to minds of the unimaginative, the merely logical, the mechanical type—with their characteristic genius for administration and for order: real gifts, but taken alone, gifts that burden their possessors with very serious limitations. There were no men of that type, so far as we know, in the New Testament church.

And it may be true—I think it *is* true—that if religion in our day is to recover its primitive strength, and mount up once more with the wings of eagles, and bring peace to our divided world—first healing the church's own shameful and paralyzing divisions—it can only be by a fresh invasion of human life by the the Spirit of God, as once before, as repeatedly before but once supremely, when the Spirit of the Lord came upon a young man in Nazareth, and through him entered the lives of all who responded to his call and went forth to follow him. If "all flesh is to see the salvation of God," it must be at the dawn of a new day for the church and for all who call themselves Christians.

Our generation is caught in the doldrums of a stale, flat, unprofitable, spiritless repetition of the past. Meanwhile the whole world is clamoring for a fresh creative power to take hold of human minds and bring peace and order out of chaos and destruction. Only the Spirit of God, coming like a refreshing breeze from the sky, can change this condition of things, and inspire us to live creatively and heroically once more—not by human might or power, but "by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Christianity began as the religion of the Spirit. The question now is, in this crucial and decisive hour, will the church be true to its origin? Is the religion of the Christian Church still the religion of the Spirit? Or has it become something else?

# Escape From Flatlands

By Lynn Harold Hough

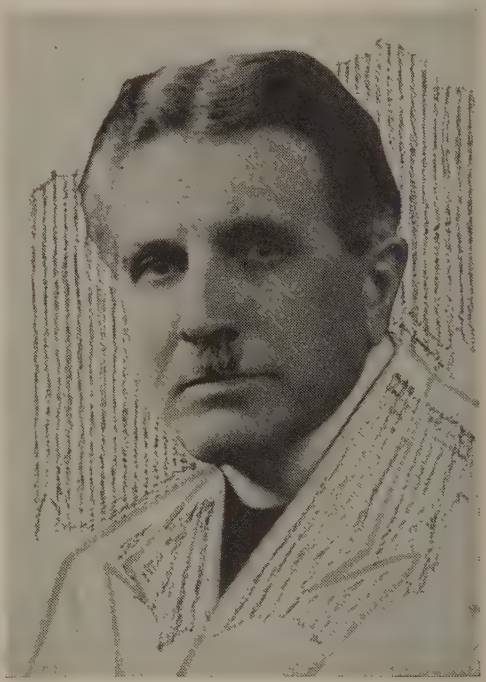
*Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not. Genesis 28:16.*

A LITTLE while ago a book was published which bore the title *Flatlands*. It was the tale of a two-dimensional world. It was a world which had no height. When one has recovered from the first shock of the oddity of the conception, its significance begins to be very clear. The more one thinks about it the more one realizes that no end of people live in a two-dimensional world. Their world has length and breadth. But it has no height. It is a world of surfaces where one never looks up. It is a world well described by words which were used originally in reference to a great European place of amusement: "The lights of the Casino have blotted out the stars."

When you read John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* you meet a number of extremely interesting people. They are described with meticulous care. They are analyzed with profound understanding. Their world is recreated by means of words which have a more than photographic adequacy. You feel all the while the finesse of a powerful mind doing its work with entire confidence. Why then does one turn from Galsworthy with a curious sense of loss of vitality? The answer, I think we can scarcely deny, is this. The author and his characters all live in a two-dimensional world. We miss terribly the sense of loftiness. There is no sky and there are no stars. The writings of H. G. Wells have just this same characteristic. They are as clear as crystal. They could scarcely be improved as regards the two-dimensional world with which they deal. But Wells had a curious way of leaving out the elements in any situation which have a quality of spiritual loftiness. Is it the simple truth that some of our brightest minds live in the Flatlands?

I

The Jacob of whom the book of Genesis tells was also a man who lived in Flatlands. He was shrewd. He was wily. He was unscrupulous. Unlike a good many modern dwellers in Flatlands, he not only lacked the vision of the heights, but he also lacked character,



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even as measured by the limited world where he dwelt. In fact he was a thoroughly bad sort. And such moral confusion did he produce in his home that he was forced to flee for his life. So at night we find him utterly weary and terribly homesick, his head on a stone, sinking into a troubled sleep. And to this man of all men there comes a vision of the heights. He sees a ladder reaching to the sky. Angels are coming and going from the heights of God. And above the ladder, God looks down upon this commerce between earth and heaven. Startled into consciousness of aspects of life he had never understood, the waking Jacob cries: "Surely Jehovah was in this place; and I knew it not."

There is something particularly encouraging about this story of Jacob. For surely if ever a man possessed a secular mind, it was he. And yet it is Jacob who sees the ladder reaching to the skies. Perhaps the power of spiritual vision lies waiting somewhere in the heart of every man. Perhaps there are no completely secular

men. Perhaps we all long to escape from Flatlands. Perhaps every worldling can see a ladder reaching to heaven.

II

The discovery of the third dimension is one of the most significant facts of human life. History is full of it. Biography is replete with the tale of it. There is a story of an eleventh century knight, Herluin, who was in the midst of a fierce battle. Swords were flashing. Men were hurling themselves upon each other with an abandon of fierceness. And suddenly there came to Herluin a bitter sense of the futility of it all. New meanings swept before his vision, and even in the midst of the fight he suddenly sensed lofty aspects of life which had been hidden from his mind. When he emerged from the battle he repudiated the ways of war and founded the monastery of Bec. From this famous monastery Lanfranc came to England. And from the same monastery Anselm came to be a part of the loftier moral and spiritual history of England. You never can tell how much will come of it when one man escapes from Flatlands.

The Middle Ages are largely occupied by a conflict between the men who lived in a two-dimensional world and the men who lived in a world which pierced the sky. There were the men to whom life was lived as if you had a body but no soul. And there were the men to whom it seemed that life ought to be lived as if you had a soul but no body. There was often confusion enough. To the men who wrote of the courts of love, marriage was a biological necessity, but all the color and glow and richness of love were found when you were in love with another man's wife. One of our scholars has pointed out the fashion in which that very great poet of the sixteenth century, Edmund Spenser, restored the poetry and the color and the beauty to men's thought of wedlock. It was in marriage that man was to find the beauty and the color and the loveliness of life, as well as the solid basis for the perpetuation of the family. Spenser did not live in a two-dimensional world. He did not live in Flatlands as did the men and women of the courts of love. He did not live in a cloud which had no connection with the solid earth. He lived in a three-dimensional world. And all the life of the English-speaking world has been a nobler experience since he lived and wrote.

III

If all this seems far away I would remind you that from all this we have come, and that, more than we know, it ticks in our brains and throbs with our hearts. But let us come to our own Flatlands. And the prospect, we must admit, is a rather sorry one. For in our day all about the world men have been pulling down the ladders which reach to the sky.

The Fascist regime is an adventure in Flatlands. It not only has no sky. It attempts to produce men whose souls are flat. It crushes those elements of free and critical thought and action without which moral loftiness is impossible. The Nazi regime is an adventure in Flatlands. It is increasingly difficult in Germany to use the vocabulary of moral excellence, except in irony. Germany finds it increasingly necessary to be cynical about virtues it can make no claim to possess, and complacent about evils which affront the conscience of mankind. Even religion tends to become German blood worshiping its own palpitations. Soviet Russia is an adventure in Flatlands. Its goals are material. Its hopes are economic. Without the inspiration of genuine spiritual loftiness it has become more and more an organized fear. Blood-letting takes the place which moral evolution would have in a land seeking to realize nobler ideals. Parliamentary democracy all too easily becomes an adventure in Flatlands. It is true that the appeal to the judgment and free decision of each citizen is full of hope for the higher life of man. But a democracy too may turn all its powers to material ends. A democracy too may attempt to live by bread alone. And a secular democracy moves and has its being in a two-dimensional world.

IV

Can the modern world see the ladder reaching to the heights? Can the modern world escape from Flatlands? The answer is that if it is to escape utter frustration and tragedy the modern world must see the ladder connecting earth and heaven. Once more the thought of mankind must be suffused with a sense of moral loftiness and spiritual grandeur. Once more nations must find the meaning of their life, not in their blood, but in their souls. We must escape from Flatlands.

And the best thing about the situation is this. The escape must first of all be an individual matter. Nothing happens to the world but first it happens to the individual. Nothing happens to the nation but first it happens to the individual. You have to begin always with a particular person. This means that we need not wait for world-wide movements. We need not wait for nation-wide movements. We can begin at once. Each one of us can make his own escape from Flatlands and take that one step for a better life for the world. And this step must be taken by the grace of God. It is the presence of God which gives significance to the vision of the heights. It is the awareness of spiritual realities which makes all the world over for us.

Even in a world where we lie with our heads on stones, when we wake to a true understanding of the realities of life we are able to say: "Surely God is in this place; and we knew it not."

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Bless to us our extraordinary mercies; if the day come when they must be taken, brace us to play the man under affliction. Be with our friends, be with ourselves. Go with each of us to rest; if any awake, temper to them the dark hours of watching; and when the day returns, return to us our sun and comforter; call us with morning faces, eager to labor, eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion, and, if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it. We thank thee, and praise thee, and, in the words of him to whom this day is sacred, close our oblation.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

# Your Money and Your Life

By John Howard Melish

*And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.* Matthew 21:12.

SOME years ago a book appeared bearing the title *If Christ Came to Chicago.* The book was a "best seller," and made many people think of the application of religion to modern life. We do not know just what the Master would do if he were to come to New York today, but we do know what he did when he went to Jerusalem. "And Jesus went into the temple of God and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple."

Jesus was what we would call today a "small town man." Nazareth was a little village. I visited it once and in five minutes was able to walk from one end to the other. When the Master began his public ministry he left Nazareth for Capernaum, some twenty miles away, on the Lake of Galilee. Today there is only one town there, Tiberius, a fishing village, with a hotel for the modern tourist. In Christ's day there were ten such towns around the lake. It was the most populous part of Galilee. That is why the Master went there; he was interested in people and felt that he had something for them which they needed. He would give that something to the people of one town, and then he would tell his friends that he must go on to the next town.

Doubtless there was in his mind from the start the thought of Jerusalem, the great city; the capital of his country, where many people lived, where church and state had their leaders, where business was dominant. We know the lure of New York for all types of Americans. Ambitious young lawyers come here from the cities of America; doctors of ability start here; business men would extend their success by coming here. Where is your son? Where is your daughter? you ask some family in the small towns of the state. The answer is —in New York. This great city has taken the cream of American ability, enterprise, ambition, art and culture. I suppose Jerusalem had a similar lure to the people of the Master's day. Youth went there to seek its fortune, business to win its profits, politics to secure its power, culture to find its opportunity, and religion to exert its influence. It is written of Jesus that he set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem.

## I

The first thing Jesus did on reaching the great city was to go into the temple.

The temple was to religion what the law courts are to law, the stock exchange and the banks to business, the Metropolitan Museum to art, the opera to music. "See," exclaimed someone to Jesus, "what great stones are here." They certainly were great, as every one remembers who has visited the wailing wall of the Jews in Jerusalem, the relics of the vast building which stood there in the days of the Master. But Jesus was not interested in architecture. What held his attention was the purpose for which the temple stood. The temple, he said, was supposed to be a house of prayer. The great stones, one on another, and rising to a supreme height until the building towered over the courts of justice, the barracks of soldiers, the warehouses of the merchants, the homes of rich and poor, suggested the spirit of man. Religion is a two-way traffic. The spirit of man flows toward God and the spirit of God flows toward man. Prayer is the approach of the human to the divine; but it is also the approach of the divine to the human. Man has been called a praying animal. And there is some truth in the description. What held the attention of Jesus when he went into the temple was the people in prayer. Two men, he said, went into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other a publican. That was what the temple was for—it was a place to pray.

Moreover, the temple was for both the Pharisee and the publican—the good and the bad man; the man who kept all the commandments and the man who broke many of them. One of the prophets said it was a house of prayer for *all* people. It will interest you to know that many people come to this church to pray who never come to a public service. I once met a woman who told me that when she was a girl at Packer, though not a member of Holy Trinity, it was her custom to drop in here occasionally. Since then, she said, she has come here whenever she has had a decision to make, when she was engaged to be married, when her baby was coming, when she had a deep sorrow. A man who is recovering from a debauch will come here to drop on his knees and ask for strength to resist. The other day a woman asked if she could not bring her dead mother here on the way to the cemetery—for just a little prayer, she said. Many who may never enter a temple themselves, ignoring religion, turn thither when death enters their family and removes one they loved, and ask for some little recognition that we are more than animals, dust of dust, ashes of ashes, earth of earth. Whatever religion may or may not be, it is a witness to the fact that God put mystery (this seems to be the meaning of the word) in our hearts.

## II

Jesus, the record says, went into the temple of God and cast out them that sold and bought in the temple. What he told them was that they had made of the house of prayer a den of thieves.

A temple must needs be supported in some way. A man from Germany was telling me recently about the church in his home town. There is only one, he said; it is used by the Catholics at nine o'clock and by the Protestants at 11 o'clock. "Who keeps it up?" I asked. "The town, of course," he replied; "it maintains the church as it maintains the streets, the town hall and the market place." That is one way of supporting the temple. In Jerusalem the authorities decided that they

could support the temple by giving concessions to certain people, the way we supported our world's fair.

One concession was that of changing money. If a man lived in Alexandria and visited Jerusalem he would have coin current in his home city; but what was the value of that money in Jerusalem? You and I, if we were traveling outside our country, would turn to the morning paper to discover the rate of exchange that day between American dollars and English pounds, or French francs or Italian lira. The rate of exchange, as you know, is a very delicate matter. I know a man who invested all his savings in French francs at the close of the war, thinking the franc was going up; it went down instead and he lost every penny he had.

JOHN HOWARD MELISH

The money-changer in the temple at Jerusalem was there to make an exchange of foreign money into current coin. But he had the ignorant person at a disadvantage. Who knew the rate of exchange? The money-changer might give you ten shekels for your Roman coins when he should have given you twenty. In other words, he could rob you handsomely and you might not even know you were being robbed. And even if you knew you might find it discreet to say nothing about it, especially if the authorities were party to it. But Jesus was not discreet. He knew those money-changers were unfair. And he called them robbers.

There in the temple also were men who sold doves. In the old sacrificial religion of the Jews every man and woman was expected to make some offering. It is recorded that when Joseph and Mary took their little boy to the temple they offered a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. It was the offering of the poor man, whereas the rich would offer an ox or a sheep. As the people who came to the temple did not own turtledoves or cattle, men were there ready to sell them for money. What is a fair price? We all know that such a question is not easily answered even today in our own land where prices are standardized more than anywhere else in the world. In the East a fair price is anything a man can get. Those men who had the monopoly of selling doves and animals in the temple evidently took advantage of the piety and the ignorance of the worshipers and charged them all the traffic would bear. To Jesus it was robbery, a misuse of their power, and he cast out all that sold doves.

In overturning the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold doves the Master did something more than whiplash a few individuals. He struck at a system. In the recent Hines trial in New York it was shown that when a policeman stopped a seller of policy in Harlem he interfered with a gigantic system which was paying enormous sums weekly to the Tammany leader. And the Tammany leader went down to police headquarters and had that policeman transferred. And the men who were arrested for violating the laws were either not brought to trial or had their cases dismissed by the magistrate. The system of graft included our civil and judicial officials.

So those sellers of doves and changers of money in Jerusalem were part of a huge system. There were higher-ups, as we say. And modern research has exposed the family of Annas and Caiaphas whose members controlled the temple resources, and has found in these the source of their great wealth. The den of thieves was the system by which the temple was supported. The chief beneficiary of that system, Caiaphas the high priest, was later to stand before the council and, tearing his clothes in assumed righteous indignation, call Jesus a blasphemer worthy of death. The tragic truth is that Jesus threatened the system of graft by which the high priest and his family profited enormously. Jesus had exposed the den of thieves.

## III

How is religion to be financed in a community? There are few more important questions than this. The method chosen by the temple in Jerusalem sent Jesus to the cross. For when he exposed it those who profited by it turned against him and succeeded in destroying him. John Huss exposed the graft and corruption of the papal church of the 14th century and tried to reform it from within. He was burned at the stake. Savonarola exposed the graft and corruption of the hierarchy in Florence and Italy a century later and begged the pope to change the system. The pope, instead, gave his approval to the destruction of Savonarola by fire. Why is it that Hitler has been able to put Pastor Niemöller in prison, even after he was declared innocent, and keep him there? Why is the church in Germany, Protestant and Catholic, so weak that Hitler seems to be able to treat it with contempt? One answer, and an important one, is that the Germans have been taxed without their consent for the support of the church. Men who had no use for any church were forced to contribute to the church. And Hitler's

opposition to the Catholic hierachy and his treatment of Protestant ministers have their tacit approval. Had a different method of church support been operative in Germany even the nazis would not have dared flaunt the church as they are doing.

In America we have no established church. One of our constitutional requirements is that there shall be a separation of church and state. The states does not tax the church, as it does not tax the school and philanthropic societies. Our theory is that the community should make it as easy as possible for individuals to support their churches, private schools and philanthropic societies. To put a tax upon these would be an obstacle in the way of having them. The community favors such voluntary effort of its citizens. And if those citizens are wise they will never ask the state to finance them. Bishop Molloy and his fellow Catholics who advocate a subsidy to the parochial schools will find that subsidized schools will be controlled by the political party which votes the subsidy in legislature or council. They may think they can control the party. Many thought they could control the nazis in Germany and the fascists in Italy but they are now discovering how unwise they were. That is becoming clearer and clearer month by month and year by year. Both Hitler and Mussolini use the church as the Sadducean party used the temple of Jerusalem. And the man who opposes either of them will, like Jesus, go to his death. Our magna charta is a free church in a free state.

And if what I have said to you is true—and I think it is tragically and terribly true—does it not follow that if we are to have a temple of religion we must support it? We cannot let the state do it; we cannot let the Sadducees do it by giving concessions to the money-changers and those who sell doves; we cannot let anybody do it for us. We must do it ourselves. Of course we need not have any temple at all; we can meet in one another's houses, as the followers of St. Paul met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla; we can assemble in the catacombs, the graveyards, the open spaces, as did the early Christians. We need not have any paid ministers; our forefathers on the frontiers raised up from among themselves lay preachers and teachers. (That is why the Methodists and Baptists are so strong throughout the west.) And what has been done can be done again. Religion does not depend upon a priesthood or a temple. Jesus was a layman. And the religion of Christ will continue to exist without the aid of churches, creeds and forms because it is life—life of the spirit.

But, having said that, you and I know that the spirit embodies itself in some outward form, such as temples. We do not meet in our homes, we meet here; we are not our own ministers, some must be our servants for Jesus' sake; and when more than a small group come together, we must have some form or there will be confusion. Temples and churches are means to an end and may be a very helpful means. And since they are helpful we want to keep them so. One way is to keep them in our own control and not allow them to be controlled by others. That means a democratic church, in which every man does his part, in which every woman has her share. The minister is free who has behind him a body of free men and women each doing what he can. I would rather be the minister of such a church on a bare living wage than minister of a church supported by one or two persons on ten times the salary. Speaking generally, and realistically, it is true of a church as of any other institution—that he who pays the piper calls the tune. . . .

The Lord Jesus, on going to the great city where men, women and children lived, went first into the temple of God. Why did he not go first to the factories where men worked? Why did he not go to the banks where men kept their money? Why did he not first visit the schools or the halls of culture? Why did he not first go to the homes where the people lived? Jesus went into the temple of God. We may not be able to explain why it is, but there is no doubt of the fact that when the church is corrupt or greedy or grasping for power all other institutions suffer a blight. And when religion is alive and free and true, life appears in politics, culture, music, business, the homes of men. In the truth of God and reality of God we are lifted above the beast and the slave. The Kingdom of God comes into politics, into business and professional life, and they are renewed like the face of the earth in spring. To that high mission of the church let us give our money and our life.

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It is no exaggeration to say that pure science is high religion incarnate. No doubt the science we have is not the whole incarnation, but as far as it goes it translates into a usable procedure what in the teaching of the sages has been an esoteric insight. Scientific method can be learned. The learning of it matures the human character. Its value can be demonstrated in concrete results. Its importance in human life is indisputable. But the insight of high religion as such could be appreciated only by those who were already mature; it corresponded to nothing in the experience and the necessities of the ordinary man. It could be talked about but not taught; it could inspire only the few who were somehow already inspired. With the discovery of scientific method the insight has ceased to be an intangible and somewhat formless idea and has become an organized effort which moves mankind more profoundly than anything else in human affairs.

Walter Lippmann.

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Some things elude the scientists, such as heroism, beauty, love, sacrifice for a cause, aspiration. How can you grasp, weigh, measure or even describe these fine qualities? My kodachrome camera grasps a sunset, but it does not appreciate it, nor glow because of it, soulfully. Eternal life is a quality beginning now and here, and flowering out later. It gives dignity to human existence, it provides motivation for noble deeds, it holds out a magnificent hope. Death is but graduation into the glorious company of the saints and sages of all time. Yes, "I believe in the life everlasting," and when I cease holding that firm faith I shall step down from my pulpit and never attempt to preach again.

John R. Ewers.

# In Praise of Totalitarianism

By Bradford S. Abernethy

*Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Colossians 3:11.*

I WISH there were a shorter word for it. "Totalitarianism" is cumbersome and cumbersome words have no place in a sermon. But there being no synonym, we shall have to use it. In addition to being cumbersome, the word has a very unsavory reputation, for it connotes a political philosophy with which we in this democracy have little sympathy. The average man judges the word by the company it keeps; he may be hard pressed to define totalitarianism, but he knows what it stands for—isn't there Germany and Italy and Japan?

It is likely that the world conjures up certain mental pictures—of concentration camps, secret police, a controlled press, a dechristianized church and guns instead of butter. To all this we have the keenest aversion. But let's not be scared off by a word. It is possible to be so frightened by a few syllables as to miss any good that may be in them. The word "radical" is a case in point. Our super-patriotic organizations go into a veritable dither at the sound of the word. It produces about the same emotional response as if you said, "leper."

But the radical is not such a loathsome species. His only crime is thinking and acting differently from the crowd; in short, being a rebel. Someone has remarked how odd it is that the Daughters of the American Revolution, than whom there are no more ardent foes of radicalism, should trace with pride their descent from rebels. Such a bad name the word "radical" has in certain quarters, and what a good word it really is! For what would we have done without yesterday's radical thinkers in politics, in science, in religion—yesterday's radicals upon whose thoughts today's orthodoxies are based?

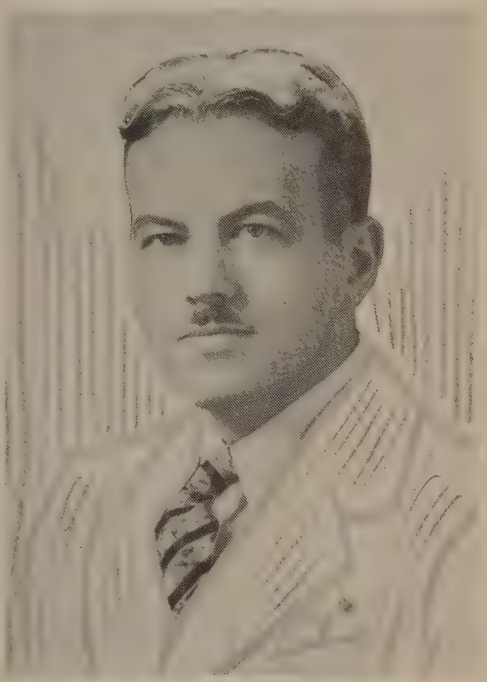
### TOTALITARIAN METHODS

So it is with our word, totalitarianism. It is possible to be so frightened by the word as to neglect any good that might be in it. But is there anything to say in praise of totalitarianism? To answer that, let us have a look at some of the methods and techniques employed in the totalitarian state.

One of the chief methods is that of indoctrination—hammering prescribed ideas into the minds of the subjects, from their youth up. The most dramatic of their formulae is to be found in the banner which hung over German youth camps last summer: "You Were Born to Die for Germany." Erica Mann in her *School for Barbarians* gives a vivid picture of the way in which the educational system in Germany is geared for pouring into youthful minds the concept that the state is the supreme object of devotion. Tell them what to believe, don't let them believe anything else, and soon they will believe it—such is the theory of indoctrination as practiced in the totalitarian state.

Another method is that of subordination. There is no such thing as individual initiative in Germany. A recent article in the *Reader's Digest* reports that the school day for a German six-year-old starts with a sort of catechism, the teacher asking, "What is our first duty as Germans?" and the class chiming back, "To love and obey the Führer." The subordination of the individual to the supreme authority is the inevitable corollary of the totalitarian idea.

A third method is that of regimentation. It follows naturally from the other two. It means, in short, the ordering of the lives of all the individuals so that they lose their identity as individuals and take their place as units in a larger whole.



Bradford S. Abernethy

To indoctrinate, to subordinate, to regiment—these are the methods of totalitarianism.

Now, as a matter of fact, there is nothing sinister in these methods as such. They become sinister when directed toward unworthy ends. Let the end be a noble one, and there is much to be said in praise of totalitarianism.

### THE IDEA APPLIED TO RELIGION

Think of our Christian religion for a minute. What is its ultimate goal? Phrase it as you will: the evangelization of the world, the hastening of the Kingdom of God, the triumph of righteousness, a society of justice and peace—all this and more is involved in what we speak of as the ultimate goal of Christianity. But to reach such a goal the methods we have just mentioned must be utilized, for though it may sound strange to say it, Christianity in its purest form has much in common with the totalitarian idea. It inherited from Juda-

ism a God who was the supreme authority. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," said the old commandment. The early Christians inherited the idea, made it a tenet of their own faith, and proclaimed a God who was supreme in power, demanding the undivided allegiance of his subjects.

Or again, look at Jesus' own ministry and you get a fairly consistent picture of totalitarian methods. There was no physical force to back up the methods, to be sure —only moral suasion and the subtle pull of a magnetic personality—but the methods are there just the same. Jesus taught wherever he went, indoctrinating, if you will; shaping men's thoughts in accord with his own. His insistence that his disciples leave all and follow him is evidence of the subordination, yes, the regimentation, of those who took his way of life for their own.

With such a rehearsal of facts behind us, I think we are on safe ground in saying that one of the major tasks of Christianity today is the rediscovery of its own totalitarianism, the adapting toward noble ends of those methods which when used for purely political purposes we so thoroughly detest. But let us state that a little more clearly.

#### *INDOCTRINATION AND SUBORDINATION*

The question has been raised by some of our most able scholars as to whether democracy can endure without indoctrination. Some say that it cannot, and that it is the function of the school to indoctrinate youthful minds with faith in the worth and value of the individual, upon which faith in democracy rests. That may seem to some to be quite outside the province of the school, but no one would deny that it *is* the province of the church. Are we doing a good job of it? We ought to be teaching far more and far better than we are—indoctrinating youthful minds with the lofty concept of individual worth finds its roots in the teachings of Jesus. Christianity could not long endure without indoctrination.

And what of the second method, subordination? Has anything happened to render no longer valid that express command of Jesus to leave all and follow him? That doesn't mean that every schoolteacher should close up his desk and go off to the seminary, or that every doctor should take down his "shingle" and volunteer for foreign missionary service, or that every salesman and clerk should turn evangelist. It does mean, as I see it, that in the conduct of life, in whatever field of activity we find ourselves, we are to leave behind the motives of selfishness and pride, "put off the old man," as Paul phrased it, and "put on the new man" whose heart has been given unreservedly to the Master.

#### *CHRISTIAN REGIMENTATION*

Furthermore, there is a sense in which some very real regimentation is in order; regimentation such as Paul spoke of, in which "there is neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, but Christ is all and in all." Such regimentation, as applied to society, means the minimizing of the labels which divide into national or racial groups men who are fundamentally one. It is true, biologically speaking, that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth." As applied to religion, it means the minimizing of the labels which divide into sectarian groups those who are fundamentally one in their belief in Jesus Christ. Labels can be forgotten in the service of a sovereign God and in devotion to a common Lord.

In *The Days of Our Years* Pierre van Paasen tells of the story which gave him his start in journalism. He was sitting in a Quebec railway station and got into conversation with two priests who were sitting next to him. Although the time was three years after Versailles these men had just heard of the war. They were missionaries in Borneo—one a German, the other a Frenchman—who had lived in perfect harmony until traders, three months previous, had brought the news of the World War. The two missionaries began to be suspicious of each other, until they actually harbored thoughts of killing. One afternoon, after two weeks of this strain between them, both arrived in the chapel, simultaneously, to ring the bell for vespers. Their hands touched. For a brief moment there was silence and then they fell on each other's shoulders, weeping.

Labels have been forgotten so long as service to a sovereign God has been kept uppermost in men's minds. Whenever God has been forgotten for long, men's differences have loomed large and insurmountable. "Neither Greek nor Jew . . . bond nor free . . . but Christ is all." If that be regimentation, let us make the most of it.

To indoctrinate, to subordinate, to regiment—these are the legitimate tasks of a Christianity which has rediscovered its own totalitarianism.

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## Who Are the Great?

THE great people do not always sit upon thrones. A few great men have sat upon literal thrones, but not many. The really great people are those who have served selflessly in the world. Jane Addams could have lived in opulence and ease, but she chose to live on Halsted Street in Chicago—a street not at all attractive—among the poor and helpless. She could have kept her convictions about justice to the poor, and war, and industry all to herself, but she expressed them, bringing down upon her head mountains of anathemas and worlds of abuse. In this way she bore a cross. In this way she ministered unto others. In this way she become great. Turner, the painter, never sat on a throne, but he will rule in the hearts of men as long as his paintings, particularly his sunsets, can be seen. Phillips Brooks, the preacher, never sat on a throne, but he will be remembered through generation after generation because of that unusual spiritual phosphorescence which caused a Boston news reporter to write in his paper one morning: "It rained yesterday, but Phillips Brooks walked down the street and straightway the sun began to shine." In these three characters, Jane Addams, Turner and Phillips Brooks and in countless others—we have evidence of the truth that beauty and goodness give royalty to life.

We see evidences all about us of the change in emphasis from material possessions to spiritual possessions. Money is no longer the god it once was. Midas,

mythical king of a mythical isle, is no longer the ideal. Rather the ideal is a Muriel Lester or a Gandhi or a Kagawa.

For a standard of greatness hold up Jesus of Nazareth. Sholem Asch has recently done so in his great book, *The Nazarene*. Jesus went about doing good. He was the servant of all. He gave his life for the sake of suffering humanity. He was a king whom the poorest could touch. He showed us how we can be great if our spirits are big enough and our humility great enough.

ALBERT BUCKNER COE.

### Einstein on the Church

BEING a lover of freedom, when the revolution came in Germany I looked to the universities to defend it, knowing that they had always boasted of their devotion to the cause of truth; but no, the universities were immediately silenced. Then I looked to the great editors of the newspapers whose flaming editorials in days gone by had proclaimed their love of freedom; but they, like the universities, were silenced in a few short weeks. Then I looked to the individual writers who, as literary guides of Germany, had written much and often concerning the place of freedom in modern life; but they, too, were mute.

Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing the truth. I never had any special interest in the Church before, but now I feel a great affection and admiration because the Church alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual truth and moral freedom. I am forced to confess that what I once despised I now praise unreservedly.

THE GUARDIAN.

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OUR fathers used to speak of gospel-hardened people—people who had heard the gospel so long, and never doing anything about it, that they had come to the point that now they hear it without hearing it. Having ears they hear not. They hear the sound, but do not hear the sense. It is what the scientists call atrophy. It fell to me and mine once to live in a house near the main line of a railway; and for some weeks we could hardly sleep at night because of the noise of passing trains and shunting; but before long we ceased to notice the noise. That may happen to our spiritual faculties. We may grow so accustomed to the Word of God that we may cease to hear it. It goes in at one ear and out at the other.

RICHARD ROBERTS.

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THERE is nothing so liberating as a sincere concern for other people. Most of the prisons in which men find themselves locked up are built in part by themselves. The end of many troubles comes when we step out of the prison of self and find spiritual liberation in earnest prayer for our friends. Have you tried it lately?

HENRY VAN DYKE.

# A Pastoral Prayer

**BY HENRY R. ROSE**

WE are in Thy hands, our Heavenly Father, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Yet there are those who tell us Thou dost not exist; that the world evolved of its own account and things are moving along of their own accord. Help us, then, as we stand before this delicately constructed universe and look up into the harmonious heavens, made luminous by millions of stars, each making room for the other and all working together like the parts of a mighty clock; help us not to be childish and say that no God did this: that there is no Divine Person standing within the starlight keeping watch above his own.

We know, O God, that Thou art difficult to comprehend. We cannot see Thy hand in the sky or watch Thy footsteps on the earth as we might, if Thou wert a Being with a body like our own. But do we not perceive Thy hand as the stars are wheeled into view nightly; and Thy footfalls as the seeds spring up into flowers and food?

Teach us the art of going from effect back to cause; from the blessings we receive, to the giver of these good and needful gifts.

Help us to exclaim, as we sweep the heavens with our telescopes or our own eyes: "O God, I think Thy thoughts after Thee."

Help us to declare, as we follow the unfoldings of human history: "One God, one law, one element and one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves."

We are glad that we believe in Thee, O Father. It not only gives us delight as we survey Thy constructive handiwork, but it gives us courage as we face the subversive handiwork of wicked men. Had they only men to work against, they might prevail; but with Thee standing athwart their tracks, they will as surely break and fall, as a mad wave against a mighty cliff.

We have not lost heart, O God, even in these heart-breaking times. We know that there is so much power in our God and so much hidden good in our fellow men that we are sure justice and right will yet prevail.

Keep us steadfastly, hopefully and happily at the tasks Thou hast set us to do in our homes, or schools, or the state, or the market place. We shall surely reap if we faint not.

Bless our loved ones, our friends, our neighbors, the whole world. Exchange, we pray Thee, hate for love; intolerance for tolerance; fear for trust; sorrow for joy; war for the peace of righteousness; and the domination of merciless men for the friendly leadership of our brother and inspirer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

# Helping People by Mail

By A. Ritchie Low

LYING on my desk are many letters. All are from people I've never met. Each one wants something different but all have this in common: every letter writer is in trouble. Here, for example, is a woman in her fifties who has been left with little money but who has a pretty good house on her hands. What should she do—sell it, leave town and seek work elsewhere or make it into a double tenement, rent part and live in the other? Still another alternative she brings up is to take in roomers. She thinks there may be money in taking tourists.

Another letter is from a man whose marriage has gone on the rocks and he wants to know what he can do about it. His wife has been running around with other men, getting in at all hours of the night, and has lately taken to liquor. Conditions, he tells me, are very bad and he simply cannot go on. He is at the end of his rope. The fellow seems terribly depressed and desperate for a way out.

### • *A Radio Question Box Experience*

If I have never seen any of these people and yet have received letters from them through the mail, how, you may ask, does this happen to come about? Who gave them my address? How did they happen to know I would be interested enough to reply to their appeals? It all came about in this way.

One day I was visiting with a friend of mine who owns one of Vermont's leading daily newspapers. In the course of our conversation I happened to tell him of my radio experience, how for over two years I had conducted a Question Box program which gave listeners an opportunity to send in questions concerning the problems of their everyday living. The program was not sponsored by anyone, the station gave the time gratis, and on my part I paid my own expenses—gas, oil, postage, et cetera. It was given up only because of the pressure of my other duties and my inability to bear the expense involved.

I went on to tell this newspaper friend that I was certain, judging from my radio contacts, that there were a great many people in our section who were in deep distress and who apparently had no one to turn to. To be sure, they could always consult a lawyer, but that costs money. Then too, they could go to some near-by pastor but unfortunately these people didn't seem, in the main, to have church connections and were reluctant to bother a pastor whom they did not know. Another thing. Some frankly stated that they would rather take up their problem with someone they didn't know and never expected to meet. As they saw it, he would be less likely to be prejudiced, to have fewer preconceived notions regarding them. They had an idea it was a disadvantage to seek out one who knew them.

### • *A Newspaper Ad. Does Good Service*

Well, to make a long story short, when I suggested to my newspaper friend that his newspaper could enhance its usefulness to its readers by inserting an advertisement every other day to the effect that an experienced counselor, a well known country minister, would be willing to answer people's questions, domestic, personal, financial, etc., free of charge, he took me up on it. It was understood that he was to insert the ad. without payment and I on my part would answer any queries that came in. No name was used, all communications were sent to a box number and forwarded by the advertising department. This assured privacy. Vermont is not a large state; indeed, it is but an enlarged village, and it was felt that those in trouble would be more likely to respond under this plan. It proved to be so.

The letters began to make their appearance just after the second insertion. One came from an old couple in Ohio who had a pathetic story to tell. They were Vermonters who had gone to Ohio to live with a son. They got along fine with him but, as the old man put it, he and his wife and the daughter-in-law "didn't hitch." They had sold the old farm back home and didn't have much of the proceeds left and they wanted to know whether, if they returned to the Green Mountains, they would be eligible to receive an old age pension. It was a pathetic letter retelling a story that I'm sure has been told many times. A note was sent them saying it was being taken up with the old age pension department and in the course of time they would hear from its director.

### • *When Foreclosure Threatens*

An inquiry came from a nurse who had experienced hard times from her graduation day. She was up against it and while she preferred to follow her profession she would be willing to take anything available. A letter of encouragement was forwarded, also a list of the unemployment agencies in her city.

Another scrawly epistle came from a woman who was, judging from her spelling, obviously French-Canadian. Her husband, she went on to say, was ill at home and now her 16-year-old boy whom she had depended on to do the chores, milk the cows, drive the truck to the creamery, etc., had been taken to the hospital. She was at her wits' end and knew not which way to turn. On top of all this, she continued, she had been notified that foreclosure proceedings would begin on such and such a date. Doctors' bills had taken so much of their income that they had not been able to keep up their payments.

In this case two things were done. A letter was sent to a minister in the city where the lad was in the hospital, asking him to call—which he did. A second was forwarded to the county agent in the mother's neighborhood giving him the particulars and asking him to look into the matter and if possible lend a helping hand. Within five days this extension service man wrote saying that he was taking it up with the lawyer in charge of the foreclosure proceedings.

### • *Still Other Problems*

A young woman wrote me one day asking whether she ought to continue working at a place where she was brought into direct contact with liquor. She didn't have to serve it herself, she admitted, but just the same she'd rather not be where the stuff was sold. What did I think of her ideas? I am not sure whether my reply was what she expected but what I said was in substance this: with all the unemployment throughout the country I gave it as my opinion that none of us could be choosers as was once the case and so long as she didn't have to sell the liquor or handle it she'd better thank her lucky stars she had a job and make the best of it. That was the last I heard of the matter.

Two letters came the same day—one from an elderly woman on a large farm who needed a reliable farm hand, the other from a farm hand who wanted to know where he could rent a farm on shares. Neither of these letters was hard to answer. All I did was to put them in separate envelopes and send them to the two inquirers—vice versa. She got her man! I hope she's pleased with him.

### • *The Most Difficult Of Problems*

"I have a very serious problem," wrote a middle-aged woman, "due chiefly to lack of business and money

trouble. The trouble is overindulgence in intoxicating liquor and staying up late at night. I need rest and sleep badly but I see no cure for this trying situation save work or money or both. Perhaps you can help me."

This latter type of problem is hardest to meet because in cases of this kind you cannot render first aid via Uncle Sam's mail. The one complained of, I later learned, was her husband and since she lived a considerable distance away letter writing was about all I could do. When I got to know more about the case the name of a local pastor was sent her. She was told he was an experienced counselor, that if she cared to consult him he would be glad to lend a hand, but that if she preferred not to do so she was free to make an appointment with me when we could go over the whole matter together.

### • *The World Full of Heartaches*

I could go on and on telling about other letters that have come my way, but I think I have given some idea as to the kind of mail one who undertakes this work receives. It is rather noticeable that most of the writers are women; men seem more reticent about talking over their everyday affairs, especially with strangers, and the men who do write write either about home problems or employment.

No man can receive this kind of mail in his letterbox each day without realizing that there is a great deal of trouble and heartache in the world and that many go through life with private sorrows of an incurable kind, sorrows that often those who are nearest and dearest to them know nothing of.

### • *There Are Pastors And Pastors*

Another thing I've learned is that there are pastors and pastors. On the whole the men in the ministry are a splendid group but in one instance I had to send a letter about a girl in desperate straits to three ministers in a certain city before I could get action. One had just moved in and didn't have the time to bother; another intimated that the girl appeared to be a Roman Catholic (which she was) and had better take her difficulties to some priest. And so it went. It wasn't that these men didn't want to be helpful; it was just a case of their being so busy running the church machinery that they didn't have the time to sit down and hear her story. I am not critical; just disappointed. Jesus had time, busy Man that he was, to do individual work with individuals; why not we?

If you want to know something of the "still, sad music of humanity" let it be known that you are willing to help people out of trouble. The music you will learn will not be sweet, but you will find joy and satisfaction in assisting fellow travelers over the highway of life and often you will find, in the most unexpected places, that chords that are broken can be made to vibrate once more.

## A Communication

To the Editors
THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY PULPIT:

SIR: I have been a reader of The Christian Century Pulpit since the first number, way back in 1929, and I can't tell you in adequate terms how much stimulation I have derived from the many sermons I have read. Perhaps the greatest value I have received has been the companionship I have had with the contributors. I feel that I know scores of excellent preachers I have never met.

But the purpose of this letter is one of curiosity. In running over my files the other day, looking for a certain sermon, I ran across a number of sermons which I had greatly liked. Then I hit upon the idea of listing ten out of this multitude of sermons which I would place among my favorites. Here they are —perhaps not the greatest or most important, but the ten I specially liked:

"Going Through with God," by William Pierson Merrill (Jan. 1930).
"A World That Cannot Be Shaken," by Ernest Fremont Tittle (Jan. 1932).
"The Unknown Soldier Speaks," by John Haynes Holmes (May 1932).
"The Meaning of Crisis in Human Life," by Harry Emerson Fosdick (Jan. 1934).
"Let's All Be Realistic," by Harry Emerson Fosdick (June 1935).
"Staying Serene in a Distracted World," by James Gordon Gilkey (Dec. 1935).
"Intimations of Immortality," by Normal Vincent Peale (April 1936).
"Keep Awake!" by Howard Thurman (June 1937).
"Facing the New Year," by Henry Hitt Crane (Dec. 1938).
"The Sound of Trumpets," by Lynn Harold Hough (April 1939).

I wonder whether other subscribers have ever made out such a list of "favorites." If so, a comparison of them might be of interest.

HAROLD W. RUOPP,
Central Church, Chicago

(Yes, it *would* be interesting, and here is space for *your* list.—THE EDITORS.)

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

*My Name* _____

*Address* _____

_____

# WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

*COMING to America from Scotland* at the age of eighteen, Rev. ROBERT FREEMAN graduated from Allegheny College and Princeton Theological Seminary. He received a number of university degrees, among them an M.A. from Princeton University. His preaching career began in the Baptist fellowship, but for many years he has been minister of the Presbyterian Church, Pasadena, Calif.

*For several years minister of the First* Universalist Church, Canton, N. Y., Rev. HUGH STEVENSON TIGNER is a frequent contributor to religious periodicals. He is also the author of *Our Prodigal Son Culture,* which is soon to come from the press.

*Dr.* FREDERICK C. GRANT *was president* of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill., from 1927 to 1938; for the past two years he has been professor of New Testament at Union Theological Seminary. In his earlier career Dr. Grant was rector of Trinity Church, Chicago, for four years and held teaching posts at Kenyon College and Berkeley Divinity School, Middletown, Conn. Among his books are *The Growth of the Gospels, New Horizons of the Christian Faith, Form-Criticism, The Beginnings of Our Religion* and *Frontiers of Christian Thinking.*

*For the past ten years Dr.* LYNN HAROLD HOUGH has been professor of homiletics and Christian criticism of life at Drew University; also dean since 1934. In earlier years he held a number of pastorates in the east, but in 1914 he became a professor at Garrett Biblical Institute and later for a brief period served as president of Northwestern University. Dr. Hough has more recently held pastorates at Central Methodist Church, Detroit, and at the American Presbyterian Church in Montreal.

*Ordained in the Presbyterian ministry* in 1917, Rev. HARRISON RAY ANDERSON held pastorates in Ellsworth and Wichita, Kan.; since 1928 he has been minister of the Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago. He received his education at Kansas State College and McCormick (now Presbyterian) Theological Seminary.

*Since 1904 Rev.* JOHN HOWARD MELISH has been rector of Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn, N. Y. Having spent several years of study at the University of Cincinnati and at Harvard, Mr. Melish graduated at the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Cambridge, Mass. Before going to Brooklyn he was associate pastor of Christ Church, Cincinnati. In recent years he has served as chairman of the Brooklyn Housing Committee and as a member of the City Affairs Commission of New York.

*Rev.* BRADFORD S. ABERNETHY *is a graduate* of Haverford College and Colgate-Rochester Divinity School. After two years of graduate study at the Universities of Edinburgh and Oxford he returned, in 1935, and accepted a call to First Baptist Church, Columbia, Mo., where he still serves as minister and also as director of the religious program for Baptist students at the University of Missouri, Stephens College and Christian College.

*Rev.* HENRY R. ROSE *is pastor-emeritus* of the Universalist Church in Newark N. J.

*Rev.* A. RITCHIE LOW *is minister of* the United Church, Johnson, Vt.

# TITLES AND TEXTS

## What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

EDWARD ALLEN MORRIS, First Presbyterian, Trenton, N. J. "Religion and Democracy." Psalm 33:12—"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."

E. A. RAMAGE, Federated Church, Lewiston, Idaho. "More Christs Needed." John 14:12—"Verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father."

R. PAUL SCHEARRER, Takoma Park Presbyterian, Washington, D. C. "Is Religion Relevant?" Matt. 22:5—"And they made light of it and went their ways."

FOR YOUR SERMON AND TEXT

. . . . . .
*Title of sermon*

. . . . . .
*Text used (write out the text)*

. . . . . .
*Name of minister*

. . . . . .
*Name of church*

. . . . . .
*Address*

WELFORD A. BROOKS, Baptist, Crestwood, Ky. "Epitaphs of the Living." Rev. 3:1—"Thou hast a name that thou livest and thou art dead."

JOHN M. VERSTEEG, Walnut Hills—Avondale Methodist, Cincinnati, Ohio. "So This Is Jesus!" Acts 25:19—"A certain Jesus who has died but who Paul said was alive."

JOHN C. PRYOR, Congregational, Gilbertville, Mass. "What the Well Dressed Are Wearing." Col. 3:12-14—"clothe yourselves with tenderness of heart, kindness, humility, gentleness, forbearance. . . . And over all these put on love, which completes them and fastens them all together."

PAUL A. FRIEDRICH, First Methodist, New Brunswick, N. J. "Safe Investments." Matt. 6:20—"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

HAROLD C. PHILLIPS, First Baptist, Cleveland, O. "God and the European War." Matt. 27:46—"My God, why . . ."

WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE, Grace Episcopal, New York. "The Heart of Christianity." Luke 22:19—"This do in remembrance of me."

# THE EDITOR'S PAGE

## The Event of the Month

AFTER waging a war in defense of her homeland which will go down in history as comparable to the Greek saga of Thermopolae, Finland finally yielded to the vastly superior strength of Soviet Russia and made peace upon terms far less satisfactory than those offered by Moscow before the fighting began. The world acclaims the gallantry of the Finnish defense. In the hideous light of the outcome, however, the code under which Finland fought is bound to be challenged by the calm judgment of mankind, and by the Finns themselves. Their cities desolate, their transportation lines destroyed, their industries shattered, their women and children uprooted and scattered to strange places, their whole economy dislocated—the Finnish people cannot help asking whether the "honor" upon whose altar they laid their sacrifice was worthy of a sacrifice so vast. Pride in the gallantry of their marvelous little army must turn to ashes as they look upon the ruin which their brief but glorious war has cost them. This pride can only be retrieved if it proves that they chose war under the assurance of effective Allied help. In which case their pride will turn to bitter resentment. It is not yet known to what extent they were encouraged by Britain and France to reject Russia's terms and to accept the hazards of an obviously unequal war. In any event, Finland is now out of the picture of the European war, and probably the Scandinavian countries as well. For Finland, all is lost save honor. What is this thing called "honor" in defense of which nations rush madly to their doom? Are Esthonia and Latvia and Lithuania dishonorable because they accepted the inevitable before the worse than inevitable happened?

**Desolated Finland**

## The Book of the Month

THE NAZARENE. *By Sholem Asch. G. P. Putnam's Sons. $2.75.*

SOMEWHAT behind the times, I have just read *The Nazarene,* and its spell is strong upon me. I am sure its picture will return to the front of my mind whenever I read the Gospels or meditate upon the life of the Master. The author set out to make the figure of Jesus credible—credible as an actual man in an actual historical situation. I believe he has come nearer to success than any of the countless writers who have essayed the same task, from Renan and Edersheim and Farrar down to Hall Caine. With consummate art he spreads a broad canvas, and by the time the picture is done he has embraced virtually the entire Gospel record in a framework of such historical verisimilitude that you can see Jesus acting and speaking with complete naturalness. And it is no unfamiliar Jesus, but the Jesus we have learned to know in the Gospels. My enthusiasm does not imply that there are no particulars in which the novelist is open to criticism. For one thing, I do not think he makes Jesus historical enough! He portrays him, in the orthodox Christian manner, as too much of a free-lance moral and spiritual teacher whose fate was determined more by the coincidence of Roman and Jewish politics than by his own direct clash with the several Jewish parties. Nor am I persuaded by his manipulation of his characters so as to free the Jews from responsibility for the death of Jesus, laying it solely upon the Romans. But he makes the historic scene come alive, so that we Western moderns are able to envisage Jesus no longer as an abstract figure suspended in a vacuum, but as one whose historical significance was determined by the concrete circumstances in which he stood and to which he spoke.

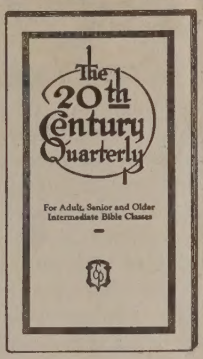
## A Thought for the Month

WHATEVER you and I may think of Karl Barth's theology, we must admit that he senses deeply the responsibility and glory of preaching. A great paragraph in one of his earlier books, *The Word of God and the Word of Man,* could well be hung above every minister's desk. "Once in the ministry," he says, "I found myself . . . being forced back at every point more and more upon the minister's specific problem, the *sermon.* On Sunday morning . . . there is in the air an *expectancy* that something great, crucial and even momentous is to *happen.*" Here is a *man* "upon whom the expectation of the apparently imminent event seems to rest in a special way, not only because he has studied the technique of the event and is supposed to have mastered it, not only because he is paid and employed by the community, or is tolerated almost without opposition in the function evidently associated with the event, but also because freedom is displayed here as well as law: the man himself chose this profession, God knows from what understanding or misunderstanding of it, and he has now for better or for worse wedded his short, his only, life to the expectation of the event. And now before the congregation and for the congregation he will *pray*—you note: pray—to God! He will open the *Bible* and read from it words of infinite import, words that refer, all of them, to God. And then he will enter the pulpit and—here is daring!—preach." My dear friend of many years, Dr. Edgar DeWitt Jones, has coined a phrase in which Barth's feeling is distilled. He calls it "This Great Business of Preaching." Jones' own ministry is a notable illustration of the humble daring and the ineffable sense of responsibility which every preacher ought to carry with him every time he enters the pulpit. There is no "business" so great as preaching.

**The Minister's High Moment**

Charles Clayton Morrison

# It Stood the Test




CARL KNUDSEN

*minister of The Church of The Pilgrimage, Plymouth, Mass., writes concerning the 20th Century Quarterly*

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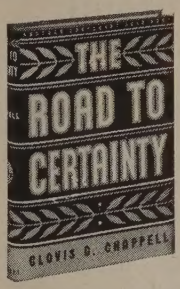


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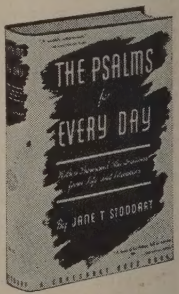


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